

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

200836Z Nov 01

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ACTION AF-00

|      |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| INFO | LOG-00  | NP-00   | AGRE-00 | ACQ-00  | CIAE-00 | COME-00 | DINT-00 |
|      | DODE-00 | DOTE-00 | SRPP-00 | DS-00   | EB-00   | EUR-00  | FAAE-00 |
|      | FBIE-00 | VC-00   | H-01    | TEDE-00 | INR-00  | L-00    | VCE-00  |
|      | AC-01   | NSAE-00 | OMB-01  | OPIC-01 | PA-00   | PC-01   | PM-00   |
|      | PRS-00  | ACE-00  | P-00    | SP-00   | TRSE-00 | USIE-00 | PMB-00  |
|      | DSCC-00 | DRL-02  | G-00    | NFAT-00 | SAS-00  | /007W   |         |

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0323  
INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 003470

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JENDAYI FRAZER  
LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY  
PARIS FOR CHARLES NEARY  
NAIROBI FOR TERRY PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/20/11

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: AMERICAN FARMER IN ZIMBABWE PROVIDES GLOOMY  
SNAPSHOT OF COUNTRY'S COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE

REF: HARARE 3401

CLASSIFIED BY POLOFF TODD C. FAULK FOR REASONS: 1.5 (B)  
AND (D).

[11.](#) (C) ON NOVEMBER 15, THE EMBASSY RECEIVED AN URGENT MESSAGE FROM AMERICAN FARMER MITZI CARRUTHERS, WHO, WITH HER ZIMBABWEAN HUSBAND BRUCE, WORKS A SIZABLE FARM 20 KM OUTSIDE OF BINDURA TOWN. THEY DO NOT OWN THE PROPERTY, BUT LEASE IT FROM A ZIMBABWEAN WHO HAS SINCE RELOCATED TO AUSTRALIA. THE FARM HAD BEEN VISITED THAT DAY BY A TECHNICAL TEAM FROM THE AGRITEX PARASTATAL BELONGING TO THE MINISTRY OF LANDS AND AGRICULTURE. AS NEITHER SHE NOR HER HUSBAND WERE AT HOME, THE FARM MANAGER CONVINCED THE TEAM TO RETURN THE NEXT DAY. FEARING THEY WERE ABOUT TO BE SERVED A SECTION 8 EVICTION NOTICE, MRS. CARRUTHERS, AN EMBASSY WARDEN, CONTACTED THE EMBASSY (SEE REFTTEL FOR DETAILS ON SECTION 8 OF THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT).

[12.](#) (C) ON THE MORNING OF NOVEMBER 16, POLOFF JOINED MRS. CARRUTHERS AT HER FARM TO AWAIT THE RETURN OF THE AGRITEX GROUP AND OBSERVE THE PROCEEDINGS. THE GROUP, COMPRISING TWO YOUNG WOMEN AND A MAN, SHOWED UP MORE THAN AN HOUR LATE AND EXPLAINED THEY WERE JUST A TECHNICAL TEAM THERE TO TAKE SOIL SAMPLES, MARK THE PROPERTY BOUNDARY, AND ASSESS THE EXTENT OF THE FARM'S INFRASTRUCTURE. (NOTE: THE FARM OWNERS SOME TIME AGO HAD BEEN SERVED A SECTION 5 NOTICE, WHICH NOTIFIES THE OWNERS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO ACQUIRE THE PROPERTY. SURVEYING THE PROPERTY IS PERMISSIBLE UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT. END NOTE.) THE  
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AGRITEK PEOPLE WERE LOW-KEY AND NON-CONFRONTATIONAL, AND HAD ALL THE APPEARANCE AND DEMEANOR OF SUMMER INTERNS. WHEN ASKED IF A SECTION 8 EVICTION NOTICE WAS SOON TO FOLLOW, THE TEAM LEADER RESPONDED THAT A DIFFERENT MINISTRY DEPARTMENT WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT AND SHE DID NOT KNOW WHAT THE DEPARTMENT INTENDED TO DO. THE TEAM CARRIED OUT ITS ONE-HOUR SURVEY WITHOUT INCIDENT.

[13.](#) (C) MRS. CARRUTHERS TOLD POLOFF THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME HER FARM HAD BEEN VISITED BY THE LANDS MINISTRY. SHE AND HER HUSBAND HAVE BEEN VERY LUCKY AND HAVE NOT HAD SQUATTERS OR WAR VETERANS ON THE FARM SINCE THE TROUBLE BEGAN LAST YEAR. SHE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT A FEW MONTHS AGO THE MAYOR OF BINDURA APPEARED ON THE FARM IN AN APPARENT SCOUTING MISSION FOR A PROPERTY THAT WAS CLOSER TO TOWN. THE MAYOR'S FARM NEAR SHAMVA WAS TOO FAR AWAY, HE REPORTEDLY TOLD THE FARM MANAGER. MRS. CARRUTHERS REPORTED THAT HER NEIGHBORS HAVE NOT BEEN SO FORTUNATE. MOST OF THEM HAVE OCCUPIERS WHO HAVE DENUDED SURROUNDING FORESTS AND BUILT HUTS ON THE PROPERTIES (POLOFF OBSERVED SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE OF THIS ON THE WAY TO THE CARRUTHERS' FARM). THE BINDURA POLICE COMMISSIONER EVEN BUILT A HUGE HOUSE IN THE MIDDLE OF A NEIGHBOR'S IRRIGATED FIELD, MRS. CARRUTHERS STATED.

14. (C) ALTHOUGH RELIEVED THAT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN SERVED A SECTION 8 NOTICE YET, THE CARRUTHERS STATED THEY ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE FUTURE. THEY ALREADY HAVE ZIM\$1.5 MILLION (APPROXIMATELY US\$5,000) WORTH OF FERTILIZERS ON FIELDS THAT ARE INTENDED TO GROW SOYBEANS. THEY HAVE PURCHASED THE SEED, THEIR WORKERS HAVE PLOWED THE

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FIELDS, AND AN EXPENSIVE IRRIGATION SYSTEM IS INSTALLED AND READY FOR USE, THEY REPORTED. THEY ARE APPREHENSIVE ABOUT PLANTING -- FEARFUL THAT THEIR CROPS WILL BE PLOWED OVER BY SQUATTERS OR UNSCRUPULOUS LOCAL OFFICIALS OR THAT THEY WON'T EVEN BE AROUND TO HARVEST IN A FEW MONTHS. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF THEY DON'T PLANT SOON, THERE IS NO DOUBT THEY WILL HAVE WASTED MILLIONS OF ZIMBABWE DOLLARS AND WON'T HAVE ANY WAY TO RECOVER IT. IN A FOLLOW-UP CONVERSATION NOVEMBER 19, BRUCE CARRUTHERS REPORTED THAT THE AGRITEX PEOPLE HAD NOT RETURNED TO THE FARM AS PROMISED. HE AND HIS WIFE ARE PLANNING TO JOIN A COLLECTIVE APPEAL BY LOCAL FARMERS TO THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR TO SAVE THEIR LAND. INDIVIDUAL APPEALS HAVE HAD LITTLE EFFECT IN THE PAST, HE SAID.

15. (C) COMMENT: IT IS PROBABLY NOT A COINCIDENCE THAT THE LANDS MINISTRY DECIDED TO SURVEY THE CARRUTHERS FARM LESS THAN A WEEK AFTER PRESIDENT MUGABE AMENDED THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT TO PERMIT THE OUTRIGHT NATIONALIZATION OF ZIMBABWE'S COMMERCIAL FARMS. THE GOVERNMENT IS EVIDENTLY REDOUBLING ITS EFFORTS TO SEIZE MOST WHITE-OWNED PROPERTY BEFORE THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION DUE BY MARCH 2002. GIVEN THE NEW LEGISLATION AND THE BINDURA

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| INFO | LOG-00  | NP-00   | AGRE-00 | ACQ-00      | CIAE-00 | COME-00 | DINT-00 |
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P 200836Z NOV 01  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0324  
INFO NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 HARARE 003470

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MAYOR'S INTEREST IN THE FARM, WE FEAR THE CARRUTHERS'

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HERETOFORE GOOD FORTUNE, AND CENTURY-LONG HISTORY IN  
ZIMBABWE, MAY SOON COME TO AN END. END COMMENT.

SULLIVAN

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